

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A composite substance ~~for forming a conductive paste,~~
comprising:

a solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in ~~said a~~
conductive paste; and metal particles wetted by said solvent,
wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried
metal particles.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (previously presented): The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:
said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:
the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to
100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (currently amended): A composite substance ~~for forming a conductive paste,~~
comprising:

a solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in ~~said a~~
conductive paste; and

metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent, wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal-compound particles.

Claim 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (previously presented): The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:
said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:
the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 10 (cancelled)

Claim 11 (previously presented): A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal particles wetted by said solvent; and
an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance
wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal particles.

Claim 12 (cancelled)

Claim 13 (previously presented): The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:
the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to
100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (previously presented): A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic
binder, and metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent; and
an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance,
wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried
metal-compound particles.

Claim 17 (cancelled)

Claim 18 (previously presented): The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:
said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:
the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to
100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 20 (cancelled)

Claim 21 (previously presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body, wherein:
said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 11.

Claim 22 (previously presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body, wherein:
said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 16.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a composite substance
used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water,
wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive
paste and is incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, wherein:
said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by
weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, further comprising the step
of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of claim 26, wherein:
said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of claim 26, wherein:
said second solvent is acetone.

Claim 29 (currently amended): A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component-binder included in said ~~conductive paste~~ and incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of claim 29, wherein:
said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

Claim 35 (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of claim 23.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The method of claim 35, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 37 (currently amended): The method of claim 35, wherein:
the solvent ~~included in said composite substance~~ is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight units relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 38 (cancelled)

Claim 39 (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of Claim 29.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The method of claim 39, wherein:
said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 41 (currently amended): The method of claim 39, wherein:
the solvent ~~included in said composite substance~~ is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claims 42-58 (cancelled)

Claim 59 (currently amended): A composite substance ~~for a conductive paste~~ comprising:
particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent, wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with ~~an organic component included in said conductive paste~~ an organic binder and insoluble in water.

prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water,
thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 60 (cancelled).

Claim 61 (currently amended): A composite substance ~~for a conductive paste~~
comprising:
particles comprising a metal-compound particle and a solvent,
wherein said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is
compatible with ~~an organic component included in said conductive paste~~ an organic binder
and incompatible with water,
prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with
water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 62 (cancelled).

Claim 63 (currently amended): A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance comprising particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent;
and
an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance;
wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible
with said organic binder and incompatible with water.

prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water,
thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 64 (cancelled)

Claim 65 (currently amended): A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance comprising particles comprising a metal-compound particle
and a solvent; and
an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance;
wherein said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is
compatible with said organic binder and incompatible with water,
prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with
water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 66 (cancelled)

Claim 67 (previously presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,
wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 63.

Claim 68 (cancelled)

Claim 69 (previously presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,
wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 65.

Claim 70 (cancelled)

Claim 71 (New): Particles for a conductive paste, each of said particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent, wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic binder and insoluble in water,
prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water,
thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 72 (New): The particles of claim 71, wherein:
said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 73 (New): The particles of claim 71, wherein:
said solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 74 (New): Particles for a conductive paste, each of said particles comprising a metal-compound particle and a solvent, wherein said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic binder and insoluble in water,

prepared by a process comprising:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 75 (New): The particles of claim 74, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 76 (New): The particles of claim 74, wherein:

said solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 77 (New): A conductive paste prepared from particles, wherein:

each of said particles comprises a metal particle and a solvent, said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic binder and insoluble in water; and

said particles are prepared by a process comprising:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 78 (New): The conductive paste of claim 77, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 79 (New): A conductive paste prepared from particles, wherein:

each of said particles comprises a metal-compound particle and a solvent, said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic binder and insoluble in water; and

said particles are prepared by a process comprising:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 80 (New): The conductive paste of claim 79, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 81 (New): An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,

wherein said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 77.

Claim 82 (New): An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,

wherein said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 79.